

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 09QUITO887, U/S Orbe on Ecuador-Colombia, Gas-and-Go, and Bilateral

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09QUITO887**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09QUITO887	2009-10-16 22:53	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Quito

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/08/1/1355/cable-230123.html>

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0887/01 2892253
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O R 162253Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0203
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0049
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0069
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NOV LIMA 0075

S E C R E T QUITO 000887

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2029/10/16
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SNAR](#) [ECIN](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: U/S Orbe on Ecuador-Colombia, Gas-and-Go, and Bilateral Dialogue

REF: QUITO 704; QUITO 223

CLASSIFIED BY: Heather Hodge...

id: 230123
date: 10/16/2009 22:53
refid: 09QUITO887
origin: Embassy Quito
classification: SECRET//NOFORN
destination: 09QUITO223|09QUITO704
header:
VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0887/01 2892253
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O R 162253Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0203
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0049
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0069
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NOV LIMA 0075

----- header ends -----

S E C R E T QUITO 000887

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2029/10/16
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SNAR](#) [ECIN](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: U/S Orbe on Ecuador-Colombia, Gas-and-Go, and Bilateral Dialogue

REF: QUITO 704; QUITO 223

CLASSIFIED BY: Heather Hodges, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In an October 15 meeting with the Ambassador, MFA Under Secretary Orbe stressed that Ecuador remained committed to improving relations with Colombia, but said the process had moved faster than the GOE had expected. He seemed frustrated with the setback caused by an Ecuadorian judge's arrest order against Colombian military chief Padilla, but he believed that the process would continue. Orbe promised to follow up on our proposal for counternarcotics cooperation under a "Gas-and-Go" arrangement, which is still in the hands of Security Minister Carvajal. The Ambassador and Orbe also reviewed progress in planning for the November Bilateral Dialogue meeting. END SUMMARY.

DEFINING AN AGENDA FOR ECUADOR-COLOMBIA RELATIONS

¶2. (C) MFA Under Secretary of Bilateral Affairs Jorge Orbe emphasized that the GOE wanted to establish an agenda of "peace and development" with Colombia and pursue confidence-building measures. He said that the GOE was pleased with the mediation provided by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Carter Center, especially the former. He stressed that it was important for Colombia to understand that Ecuador did not want narco-politics, and then asserted that former Under Secretary of Government Ignacio Chauvin (Ref B) committed his illegal acts in cooperation with the FARC after he left government.

¶3. (C) Orbe confirmed that FM Fander Falconi and President Correa had a sincere desire to re-establish bilateral relations with Colombia, and that the Correa administration had been careful at the highest levels to avoid antagonistic rhetoric that could

jeopardize forward progress. However, he stated that the recent progress on re-establishing bilateral relations had gone faster than the GOE had imagined or even wanted.

14. (C) Orbe added that both governments had a responsibility to respond to the interests of their people to improve political and commercial ties. Orbe suggested that the current political environment was more conducive to a rapprochement, as Ecuador was no longer in a campaign mode and Uribe had go-ahead to run for election again and had less need to worry about FTA passage in the U.S. Congress.

COMMISSION MEETINGS POSITIVE

15. (C) Orbe observed that recent meetings with the GOC had been positive, giving as an example Defense Minister Ponce's meeting with his counterparts on October 9 in Ipiales. He stated that the GOE was pleased that Colombia was planning on releasing the information on the Raul Reyes computers to Ecuador via the OAS. He highlighted the three commissions established by the two foreign ministers in Ipiales on October 9: Security and Crime Control (led for the GOE by Justice Minister Nestor Arbito), Border Development (led for the GOE by Orbe), and Sensitive Considerations (led by the foreign ministers).

16. (C) Orbe asserted that, despite press reports to the contrary, the October 16 and November 3 Bilateral Border Commission (COMBIFRON) meetings in Ibarra and the October 22 Border Development Commission meeting in Ipiales would take place as planned. However, the Embassy confirmed with Orbe's assistant on October 16 that the meetings had indeed been postponed.

LEGAL CASE AGAINST GENERAL PADILLA

17. (C) On the arrest warrant filed by Sucumbios Province Public Prosecutor Jimenez containing charges against Colombian Armed Forces chief Freddy Padilla, Orbe reiterated Ecuador's official mantra that the judicial branch has the power to pursue such a case independent of the Executive. Separately, Defense Minister Javier Ponce stated publicly on October 15 that "the action of the judge is unfortunate, as it makes the re-establishment of relations (with Colombia) more difficult."

18. (S/NF) Orbe expressed frustration that every time progress was made in the bilateral relationship, something happened to derail

that process. He speculated that some individuals in the GOE might have been responsible for this last derailment. NOTE: Separately, working level contacts at the Prosecutor General's office told us that a representative from the Presidency and the ministries of Government and Justice traveled to Sucumbios to encourage the prosecutor to initiate legal action against Padilla. However, we find this assertion odd given that the highest levels of the GOE very publicly committed to improve the relationship. Sucumbios province Judge Francisco Revelo will review the possibility of an extradition request to the GOC to send Padilla to Ecuador. END NOTE.

USG ASSISTANCE IN IMPROVING ECUADOR-COLOMBIA RELATIONS

19. (C) The Ambassador recalled for Orbe that FM Falconi had suggested on August 5 (Ref A) that the USG could help improve communication between Ecuador and Colombia, and asked Orbe for suggestions. Orbe said that the USG could: 1) help Colombia gain confidence in their bilateral mechanisms, such as the Bilateral Border Commission (COMBIFRON), and in the GOE commitment to the warming of relations; 2) assist in addressing the humanitarian situation of the Colombian refugees in the northern border region of Ecuador with programs of integration and alternative development; and 3) help Colombia be more effective in fighting the cultivation of drugs.

110. (C) When the Ambassador raised the ideas of bringing key contacts from Colombia to Ecuador and vice versa, and bringing a team from Washington to assess possible funding options for the northern border region, Orbe did not comment. The Ambassador

emphasized that the USG was already contributing to the security and development of the northern border region. She observed that Defense Minister Ponce recently appeared more comfortable with the assistance we have provided to the Ecuadorian military, such as building or improving military detachments along the border. She also emphasized that USAID had several programs to develop economic opportunities in the northern border region.

GAS-AND-GO

¶11. (C) The Ambassador inquired as to the status of GOE consideration of the USG's "Gas-and-Go" proposal, an arrangement under which the USG would use Ecuadorian airports for refueling of counter-narcotics surveillance aircraft without maintaining any permanent USG facilities. She explained that the Embassy had not been pressing on the issue due to possible sensitivities in connection with the U.S. Defense Cooperation Agreement with Colombia. She stressed that President Correa had responded positively to the idea in January, saying, "anything in the name of counter-narcotics." Orbe said that he did not know the status, explaining that Security Minister Miguel Carvajal and Defense Minister Ponce were in the lead on this decision.

¶12. (C) The Ambassador observed that, while she could provide no assurances, progress on Gas-and-Go could strengthen Ecuador's case for renewal of the ATPA. Orbe responded somewhat angrily that Ecuador wanted to lessen the emphasis of narcotics in the bilateral relationship, and that the GOE would not be blackmailed with regards to the ATPA. The Ambassador noted the reality was that the ATPA came with conditions, but that these included much more than a review of counter-narcotics cooperation. She said that the U.S. Congress would review the investment problems encountered by U.S. businesses in Ecuador, as well as adherence to IPR standards, among other criteria. She emphasized that she felt that movement on Gas-and-Go might help Ecuador's case.

¶13. (C) Orbe promised to send a note to Security Minister Carvajal and to speak personally with Foreign Minister Falconi on Gas-and-Go. The Embassy will follow up with both ministers to assess progress.

BILATERAL DIALOGUE

¶14. (C) The Ambassador said that the USG was waiting for confirmation on the dates of November 9 for the Trade and Investment Council and November 10 for the Dialogue. Orbe said that the dates should work, but would confirm for us after

Falconi's return on October 16. The Ambassador noted that the USG wanted to limit the agenda for the Bilateral Dialogue so that it was manageable in one full day, suggesting that the plenary in November would not be the last opportunity for engagement.

¶15. (C) When Orbe asked who would lead the U.S. delegation, the Ambassador responded that if Arturo Valenzuela were confirmed by the Senate as Assistant Secretary, he would lead the delegation. If he were not confirmed, the Ambassador said, another senior WHA official would likely lead. Orbe said that MFA Vice Minister Lautaro Pozo, Trade and Integration Vice Minister Julio Oleas, or he himself would lead the Ecuadorian delegation. He added that Security Minister Carvajal and Coordinating Minister of Social Development Jeannette Sanchez might attend as well. He said that the GOE would be able to confirm attendance once the USG's participation was confirmed.

¶16. (SBU) The Ambassador noted that three of the working groups had met, and that the Migratory Issues working group was scheduled to meet on October 20. Orbe suggested a preparatory meeting on November 5, to include the Ambassador and higher level GOE officials.

COMMENT

¶17. (C) Orbe did not elaborate on his comment that rapprochement with Colombia had proceeded faster than "imagined or even wanted." In any case, there has been a considerable opening of space for renewed dialogue and cooperation between the two countries. We

will continue to explore with the GOE how the USG might assist in
facilitating communication and exchanges between Ecuador and
Colombia to foster confidence and cooperation.

HODGES

=====CABLE ENDS=====